

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

10 July 1949

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM No. 200

SUBJECT: Soviet Aviation Day

1. The annual air show celebrating Soviet Aviation Day was held at Tushino airfield, Moscow, on 17 July. This evaluation is based upon preliminary cable reports. Pictures and more complete information are expected later. Approximately 500 aircraft, of which 351 were military types, participated. The numbers of the newer combat types exhibited closely correspond to those shown in the May Day parade. (See Attachment 1 for an indication of the more significant aircraft appearing in recent Soviet demonstrations and in the Aviation Day ceremony last year.)

2. Although this year's showing of 30 B-29s is the largest to date, one formation of 40 aircraft was seen several days previously, apparently practicing for the event, and a formation of 56 was seen before the 1949 May Day show.

3. One new twin jet bomber with swept-back wings was reported. This is probably a developmental model. Preliminary cables from Moscow indicate that four additional swept-back wing jet fighters participated. It is not yet clear whether these are new models. It is more likely that they are modifications of the Lavochkin and Mikoyan-Gurevich designs.

4. No outstanding developments over the previous show were noted. The impression gained is one of normal progress. The press reports of high speeds seem to have been based on the flight of a previously shown twin jet bomber and the four individual jet fighters referred to above. The general tone of the exhibition was higher than usual because of the elimination of older, obsolescent types.

NOTE: The intelligence herein was provided by the Directorate of Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, and was concurred in by the Office of Naval Intelligence and the Intelligence Division, Department of the Army. Department of State resources were contacted but the Office of Intelligence Research has not been requested to comment on this paper. Independent CIA sources do not disclose any information at variance with this evaluation.

Date: 16/11/77 By: 024

Auth: DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77
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Class. CHANGED TO: TS S C

DECLASSIFIED

NO CHANGE in Class. ☐

5. Although previously displayed in May, and therefore not new, the swept-back wing jet fighters appear to constitute the more significant equipment exhibited. The two principal types noted seem to be roughly comparable to the American F-86. The appearance of 30-45 of each type is not of itself preclusive evidence that either is in series production. It is not uncommon Soviet practice to produce that large a number for State Tests prior to acceptance. The recent award of a Stalin Prize to the designing team of Mikoyan and Gurevich suggests that the MIG has now won official approval and may soon enter series production.

6. This Aviation Day exhibition continues to support the belief that Soviet aviation doctrine has materially changed since World War II. At that time the Soviet Air Force was regarded as a tactical weapon to be employed in the support of land armies. As time passes it becomes more evident that defense against strategic air attack and preparations for waging strategic air warfare on their own account have attained increasingly greater importance in Soviet considerations. The production in quantity of B-29 type bombers indicates a Soviet awareness of the part long-distance air bombardment has come to play in modern warfare. The production in quantity of high-speed interceptors of the MIG and Lavochkin types would infer Soviet recognition of their own vulnerability to strategic air operations.

7. Any evaluation of the Soviet air program based upon this and previous air shows leads to the conclusion that it is generally comparable to our own, other than in very-heavy bombers. There appears to be no shortage of designing talent. Production successes will probably be conditioned by Soviet requirements for precision equipment in the electronic and other fields necessary for a well developed and effective air force.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Project IM-200

OFFICE OF REPORTS AND ESTIMATES

Project Proposal Memorandum

Date: 18 July '49

File

To: B/EE (Intelligence Control)

From: Staff Intelligence Group, Projects Planning

Subject: New Soviet Aircraft

Statement of Project

Origin: DCI for President

Problem: Give such evaluation as we can of the new Soviet aircraft in Moscow airshow.

Assumptions: Director has contacted General Cabell but this should not preclude our contacting A-2.

Scope:

Classification to be no higher than: TOP SECRET

Form: IM

Dates: To G/SI by Tuesday 1500 July 19.

Branch responsibilities: Draft IM

Departmental responsibilities: Include Navy views.

Recommended Dissemination:

~~SECRET~~

1. USSR Air Strength

Approved For Release 2001/03/02 : CIA-RDP78-01617A000600110001-9

2. Aircraft, new in USSR

~~TOP SECRET~~

ATTACHMENT A

Aviation Day 17 July 1949	May Day 1 May 1949	Aviation Day 25 July 1948
30 B-29	10 B-29	15 B-29
45 TU-2 (twin-engine bomber)	45 TU-2 (twin-engine bomber)	36 TU-2 (twin-engine bomber)
45 Stormovik (probably IL-10)	45 IL-10 (Stormovik)	27 IL-10 (Stormovik)
36 YAK jet fighters (probably YAK-15)	45 YAK-15 (single jet fighters)	37 YAK-15 (single jet fighters)
45 MIG jet fighters (swept-back wing)	45 MIG jet fighters (swept-back wing)	32 MIG-9 (single jet fighter) (conventional wing)
36 La Jet fighters (swept-back wing)	30 La jet fighters (swept-back wing)	

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